

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 310

By Atchley

A RESOLUTION To honor and commend Tina Wesson for
earning the title of "Survivor of the Australian
Outback."

WHEREAS, It is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those citizens who through their extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves as Tennesseans of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, One such noteworthy person is Tina Wesson of Fountain City, who recently emerged as the Champion of "Survivor II: The Australian Outback"; and

WHEREAS, The daughter of Jim and Carolyn McClain, Mrs. Wesson was born and raised in Knoxville; she earned a Bachelor of Science in Therapeutic Recreation in her hometown at the University of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, As a professional, Mrs. Wesson has worked as a Community Education Director, Flight Attendant, Substitute Teacher, Swimming Instructor, and Certified Nursing Assistant; in each of those positions, she displayed the remarkable ability to relate well with people from all walks of life, a talent that served her well in the Australian Outback; and

WHEREAS, As an avid outdoorswoman and accomplished athlete, Tina Wesson was well-prepared for the physical challenge of living in the wilderness for forty-two days; she had

previously proven her unremitting stamina and unsurpassed mental toughness as a competitor in the Dublin, Ireland Marathon, Champion of the Tennessee State Racquetball Tournament, and as a participant in her hometown mini-triathlon, in which she finished first in her age division; and

WHEREAS, Originally designated as an alternate from among the show's 49,000 applicants, Tina Wesson charmed her tribemates from their first days together in the Outback; her charisma and caring manner quickly earned her the role of the unofficial den mother of the Ogakor tribe; and

WHEREAS, As her tribe struggled early in the competition, she was a source of strength, pushing her mates to persevere; her efforts were a key factor in allowing her tribe to merge with the Kucha tribe at even strength; and

WHEREAS, In the newly-formed tribe of Barrimundi, Mrs. Wesson's vision and acumen immediately became obvious to all as she sacrificed her own opportunity for immunity in the first individual immunity challenge in order to allow Keith Famie, the most vulnerable of her old Ogakor tribemates, to ensure his safety; a well-calculated risk at the time, the decision paid great dividends, as Keith became a strong ally who would play a key role in Tina's remarkable run to the final three; and

WHEREAS, As the competition progressed, Tina admitted that she missed her "husband and three children more than anything"; during the show's twelfth episode, her beloved family helped her win a reward challenge, which provided her with the opportunity to chat online with her loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Reinvigorated by this contact with her loved ones, Mrs. Wesson continued to "outwit, outplay, and outlast" in reaching the final days of competition; and

WHEREAS, Having never received a banishment vote, she came within a single vote of leaving the Outback when Texan Colby Donaldson was forced to choose his final competitor;

despite the prevailing opinion that exiling Mrs. Wesson would ensure his victory, Colby decided to banish Keith, having been won over by Tina's kind heart and Southern charm; and

WHEREAS, Facing their last opportunity to sway the jury of their peers, Tina and Colby entered the final tribal council, which would decide who the million-dollar Survivor would be; asked to share the three factors that made her presence as a finalist possible, Tina selected: strategy, Colby, and heart/God; and

WHEREAS, During the jury's questioning, she also shared that the first three things that she would like to do with the winnings were: to pay off her home mortgage, to pay off the home mortgage of her best friend (Tracy Graves), and to establish a charitable fund to assist one needy family each year, an idea she credited to Elizabeth Filarski; and

WHEREAS, Forty million viewers watched as the results of the final tribal vote were televised at a live reunion; at a Mexican restaurant in Knoxville, Tina Wesson's grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins launched into an unbridled celebration, when it was revealed that she was the sole Survivor of the Australian Outback; and

WHEREAS, Despite his loss, Colby hugged Tina in celebration and divulged that he did not regret his decision to allow Tina to advance and that he had not "lost a single night of sleep wondering whether or not [he] would win, because she deserved to win"; and

WHEREAS, During the reunion, Tina's fellow competitors showered her with lavish praise for her strategy, determination, and character; Alicia Calaway commented, "She really played the game. It wasn't winning seven or eight challenges to get this far. It was using her brain. She's a smart woman, and I think she deserves it"; and

WHEREAS, Since returning to America and emerging as the true Survivor, Tina Wesson has become an overnight star, appearing in "Got Milk" advertisements and on numerous television programs such as "The Late Show with David Letterman"; through it all, she has carried herself with the utmost dignity and humility; and

WHEREAS, A devout Christian, Tina Wesson always endeavors to remain true to family and community values of the highest order; her success is a source of great pride for her husband, Dale, her children, Katie and Taylor, her family, and her community; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Wesson epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean, and she serves as an exceptional ambassador of this State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend Tina Wesson of Fountain City for her sterling character, join in celebrating her victory in "Survivor II: The Australian Outback"; and thank her for bringing unprecedented honor to this State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we wish her much happiness and every continued success in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.